

Contents.

ESSAY IV.

ON SOME OF THE CAUSES BY WHICH EVANGELICAL
RELIGION HAS
BEEN RENDERED UNACCEPTABLE TO PERSONS OF
CULTIVATED TASTE.

LETTER I.

Nature of the displacency with which some of the most peculiar
features of Christianity are regarded by many cultivated men,
who do not deny or doubt the divine authority of the religion—
Brief notice of the term Evangelical..... p. 149

LETTER II.

One of the causes of the displacency is, that Christianity, being
the religion of a
great number of persons of weak and uncultivated minds,
presents its
doctrines to the view of men of taste associated with the
characteristics of
those minds; and though some parts of the religion
instantaneously
redeem themselves from that association by their philosophic
dignity, other
parts may require a considerable effort to detach them from it
—This easily
done if the men of taste were powerfully pre-occupied and
affected by the
religion—Reflections of one of them in this case—But the men of
taste row in
question are not in this case—Several specific causes of
injurious impression,
from this association of evangelical doctrines and sentiments,
^with the
intellectual littleness of the persons entertaining them—Their
deficiency and
dislike of all strictly intellectual exercise on religion—Their
reducing the whole
of religion to one or two favourite notions, and continually
dwelling on them—
The perfect indiffrence of some of them to general knowledge,
even when not
destitute of means of acquiring it; and the consequent voluntary
and contented
poverty of their religious ideas and language—Their admiration
of things in a
literary sense utterly bad—Their complacency in their
deficiencies—Their
injudicious habits and ceremonies—Their unfortunate metaphors
and similes
—Suggestion to religious teachers, that they should not run to its
last possible
extent the parallel between the pleasures of piety, and those of
eating and
drinking—Mischief of such practices—Effect of the ungracious
collision
between uncultivated seniors and a young person of literary and
philosophic
taste—Expostulation with this intellectual young person, on
the folly and
guilt of suffering his mind to take the impression of evangelical
religion from,
anything which he knows to be inferior to that religion itself, as
exhibited by the
New Testament, and by the most elevated of its disciples.....p.
154

LETTER III.

Another cause, the Peculiarity of Language adopted in religious
discourse and
writing—Classical standard of language—The theological
deviation from it
barbarous—Surprise and perplexity of a sensible heathen
foreigner who, having
learnt our language according to its best standard alone,
should be introduced
to bear a public evangelical discourse—Distinctive
characters of this
Theological Dialect—Reason? against employing it—
Competence of
language to express all religious ideas without the aid of this
uncouth peculiarity
—Advantages that would attend the use of the language of
mere general
intelligence, with the addition of an extremely small number of
words that may
be considered as necessary technical terms in-theology
;*.....»».....p.